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ABSTRACT

The process of teacher supervision is treated in detail in this paper, as it affects both the supervisor and the teacher. In the first section, the domain and assumptions of the supervision process are defined. Next, a format for providing individual supervisory assistance to improve classroom effectiveness is described. In the last section, five phases of a positive supervisory experience are delineated with examples from both a supervisor's and a teacher's point of view. In the vignettes, the technical content of the supervision involves student engaged time and student success. The psychological content deals with how the supervisor and teacher think about their interactions and improvements. (Author/MLF)

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SUPERVISION FOR EFFECTIVE CLASSROOMS: FIVE PHASES OF A POSITIVE SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

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February, 1981

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Abstract

This paper has three major sections. In the first section, the domain and assumptions of the supervision process are defined. Next, a format for providing individual supervisory assistance to improve classroom effectiveness is described. In the last section, five phases of a positive supervisory experience are described with examples from both a supervisor's and teacher's point of view. During the entrance phase, the teacher and administrator discuss the format and expectations for supervision. In the diagnosis phase, the teacher and supervisor decide the focus for supervision. During the technical success stage, the teacher and supervisor are successful in modifying professional behavior. The fourth phase, examining meaning for self, the teacher and supervisor examine the implications of technical success for their professional role and their personal lives. During the reintegration phase, both teacher and supervisor consolidate the meanings of professional and personal change, integrate the technical successes into the professional repertoire and disengage from the supervisory relationship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	2
DOMAIN AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE SUPERVISION PROCESS	4
A FORMAT FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION	9
FIVE PHASES OF A POSITIVE SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE	14
Entrance	15
Diagnosis	15
Technical Success	16
Student Engaged Time - A Beginning Elementary School Teacher's Experience with Supervision	17
Examination of Meaning for Self	24
Reintegration	25
Student Success and a Teacher's Standards — A Supervisor's Experience	27
SUMMARY	35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

INTRODUCTION

This paper is written for a growing audience who are seeking the answers to the questions: "What is it like to be supervised?"; What is it like to conduct instructional supervision?"

We assume that supervision is possible where the superintendent places a priority on improving classroom instruction and provides appropriate training for principals, central office personnel and teachers (Ryan and Hickcox, 1980; Neagley and Evans, 1980). However, supervision is not a role which is comfortable for many educators. Given how little supervision around classroom instruction takes place in schools, we could conclude that few administrators enjoy doing supervision (Ellett, Pool, & Hill, 1974). This is not surprising as we believe it is one of the most difficult professional activities to master. And if, as for most supervisors, there is also a requirement to administer a school, or a district, then conducting classroom supervision is relegated to the back burner while other fires are being put out.

The paper begins to answer those questions by defining the domain of supervision, and listing three assumptions underlying the supervisory process. A format for structuring the supervisory experience and five phases of a positive supervisory experience are described. Two vignettes, one from a beginning teacher's viewpoint, the other from an experienced supervisor's/principal's viewpoint, are used to illustrate the five phases of a positive supervisory experience. While this is a paper mainly concerned with the psychological process of supervision, we believe that the focus of

supervision for teachers should be toward improving classroom instruction. For this reason student engaged time (the amount of time students spend actively working on a task) and student success, two areas research point to as affecting student outcomes in basic skills, are used to provide the focus, or technical content in each of the examples.

DOMAIN AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE SUPERVISION PROCESS

Ask yourself, "When was it that I asked my boss for help in performing my professional role?" The answer probably reflects most people's reluctance about supervision; of course there are exceptions.

Supervision is for many an uncomfortable experience. It isn't like making friends, or working with a peer on a project. The supervisory process may call up feelings of inadequacy, of being judged, of having to conform to the arbitrary standards of others. Supervisors, as well as supervisees, feel tensions within this relationship. Bad decisions have been made capriciously, affecting people's personal and professional lives. Even if this hasn't happened, most will admit a slight discomfort at a yearly evaluation. There is a loss of control. These are natural feelings about the uncomfortable relationship of supervision. Given these connotations about supervision, the domain of supervision is defined below.

Supervision in the helping professions usually consists of three roles: the supervisor (such as a principal, content area specialist or another teacher), the supervisee (in this case, the teacher) and the client (the students).[1] The perspective of this paper is that the domain

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[1] One could also see the superintendent of small and medium size districts serving this function with their prinipals. In this case, the teachers are seen as third party, while the superintendent serves in the role of supervisors and the principal in the role of supervisee. However, given certain minimum conditions, the supervisory relationships and processes could be the same.

of supervision rests on the supervisor and supervisee exploring the patterns of their behavior and the meanings that each attaches to those patterns. The goal of this exploration is the improvement of professional practice such that each individual's role (i.e., supervisor, supervisee and client) is more fully realized. For example, it is the role of the student to learn; the role of the teacher is to guide students' learning; and the role of the principal is to support the teacher and students in that process.

When using the term supervisor, we mean the person who has the formal authority, by virture of his/her role position, to do formal evaluations of a professional's performance within an organization, or someone who has input into such an evaluation. It is this supervisor who has the major responsibility for communicating and refining the organization's intentions to those whom he/she evaluates (Etzioni, 1964). This definition makes explicit the idea that supervision and evaluation do not happen independently. The definition also links supervision to professional growth and to the purpose and goals of the organization in which the supervision takes place.

In a positive supervisory relationship, the major outcome for both the supervisor and supervisee is an increased competence in performing their professional roles, although at times the supervisor and supervisee may delve into more personal matters (Herrick, 1977; Squires, 1978). Cogan (1973) would argue that the domain of supervision should be limited strictly to the behavior patterns of teachers. However, this prohibition does not recognize the meanings that professionals attach to their behavior.

On the other hand, supervision is not a therapy or a counseling relationship (Hansen, 1971). What appears to differentiate therapy from supervision is the emphasis on professional role (Squires, 1978).

Three assumptions about supervision provide structure for the rest of the ideas presented in this paper.

One assumption that forms the basis for the supervisory process is that behavior is observable and patterned. If one enters a classroom, one can observe the activities going on there -- students looking toward the teacher, the teacher writing on the board, moving around the room, and asking questions of other students. All this can be observed.

Further this observable behavior is patterned in that the behaviors show some consistency and regularity over time. For example, classes begin and end with some regularity. Some teachers begin the lesson when the bell rings; others after all students are seated at their desks. As another example, the process of instruction usually consists of segments such as review, presentation of new material, guided practice, and independent practice. Not only are most classroom environments patterned, but people's interactions with their environment are also patterned. For example, Mr. Jones has patterned the environment so that lessons begin on time, students keep busy, and homework is usually assigned after the bell has rung. Mr. Jones also knows that despite this careful patterning of the environment, if May sits by Tasha, neither will complete their seat work. These patterns govern the practice of teaching and supervising.

Teachers and students live these patterns most of the time. The patterns help to reduce uncertainty and provide a safe and predictable environment to which to work and learn. However, these behavior patterns

may promote or discourage students' learning.

A second assumption is that individuals attach different meanings or values to the same behavior patterns. This is done by relating the behavior patterns to different criteria such as "professional manner," "student achievement" or "student self-concept." For example, two individuals may disagree on the appropriateness of a teacher-directed, structured approach to teaching because one values students' achievement on standardized tests of reading and mathematics while the other values students' learning to take charge of their own lives. Both may see the same quiet, task-oriented class, yet both would interpret the behavior patterns differently. Like these individuals, most of us make jumps or leaps from the behavior we observe to inferences about that behavior. We have a tendency to judge what we see by personal standards and by our own beliefs about what is good, true and right. While it is not possible to stop our leaps from data to judgement, in the professional world of teaching and supervising it is necessary to be able to explicitly trace the path of our judgements back to the data themselves and for the teacher and supervisor to share that journey through the supervisory relationship. It is also important to be able to explicitly state the criteria that are being used to make judgements.

A third assumption of supervision is that there are observable classroom patterns that are meaningfully related to important student outcomes. However, until recently, there were few classroom behavior patterns which had been identified objectively through research.

Cogan (1973) laments, "The still unbridged gap between the observed behavior of teachers and the learning outcomes of students represents a serious weakness in the use of observation systems in clinical supervision" (p. 160). Happily, this is less the case today. Many large-scale classroom studies are bridging the gap between classroom interaction and students' learning outcomes. As a result, there are a number of teaching and learning behavior patterns supported by research studies which relate to student outcomes on standardized tests of basic skills, at least at the elementary level (Huitt and Segars, 1980). These behaviors have the possibility of significantly improving schools' instructional outcomes as the behaviors form the foundation of the schools' supervisory system (Bailey and Morrill, 1980). The key here is to have those behaviors take on meaning for teachers and instructional supervisors within the school. This is the proper domain and content of instructional supervision. In the sext section of the paper, we will discuss one format which may provide format for structuring the supervisory relationship.

A FORMAT FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION

Individual supervision provides a format which can be used by supervisors and others to help provide structure and safety in the uncomfortable supervisory relationship. In this section, we explain individual supervisory format by describing the steps of a "clinical" supervisory cycle. In our opinion, the use of clinical supervision provides one of the best formats for individual supervision in schools. Research documenting the effectiveness of this format is reported in Sullivan (1980). More detailed rationales and explanation of this format can be found in Cogan (1973), Goldhammer (1969), Anderson and Krajewsky (1980).

The clinical supervisory models consist of at least four steps: the preconference, the observation, the analysis and reflection, and the follow-up conference. It is generally assumed that the school in which supervision takes place has provided appropriate training for all staff in the format of the supervisory model, and has a clear way of rating professional performance which is understood by the staff, and is consistent with teacher association contracts.

The suggestions made in this section are prescriptive and are intended for the supervisors and teachers new to supervision. Naturally, both supervisor and teacher will adapt to their roles as supervision progresses.

The Preconference

During the preconference, the supervisor and teacher set the goals for the up-coming observation. These goals are consistent with the general

goals set by the supervisor and teacher during previous supervisory sessions. Specific data collection methods are reviewed to determine if they are appropriate for the goals to be accomplished. A time is set for the observation to occur. The teacher assures the supervisor that the classroom situation is an appropriate one for the problem at hand.

For a supervisor and teacher who have some common experience with the supervisory process, the preconference may last only five minutes. On the other hand, supervisors and administrators just beginning this process in a school-wide effort, will realize the value of fully modeling a preconfernece to provide the teacher with vital understandings necessary to the successful completion of beginning a positive supervisor experience. During the preconference, both supervisor and teacher establish an environment where the ground rules are known.

The Observation

The purpose of the observation and type of data to be collected is established during the preconference. The administrator or supervisor arrive at the classroom on time and takes his/her place in a place agreed upon during the preconference. The supervisor does not interupt either the teacher or the students in the lesson, unless this was agreed to in the preconference. During the observation, the supervisor records the data in the manner agreed upon during the preconference. The supervisor may also note other data not included on the particular form being used, but which pertain to the goals identified in the preconference.

During the observation, the supervisor carefully notes patterns in the classroom. The supervisor is probably advised to spend time looking

for patterns of the students, as the students generally are the best source of evidence that learning is taking place. Teachers appreciate this, as patterns of this type may go unrecognized by the teacher, especially in large classrooms or where there is much individual activity. The supervisor resists the impulse to find fault with the classroom. Instead, the supervisor notes the many positive patterns which are in evidence and contribute to students' learning. The supervisor knows from experience that in many of the classrooms in the school, a number of the learning-teaching patterns promote students' learning.

The supervisor realizes the importance of taking detailed notes on classroom patterns, as this provides a helpful history for the teacher and supervisor to use in discussing the class during the post-conference. The supervisor also uses the notes to jot down hunches or hypothesis that he/she might want to discuss with the teacher in the post-conference. When leaving, the supervisor is as inconspicuous as possible. At this time, no judgement about the class is given, for the patterns of the observation need to be discussed more fully with the teacher during the post-conference. The supervisor leaves with a goodbye and a promise to meet with the teacher in a post-conference during the next few days. As both teacher and supervisor have been trained in data gathering and pattern analysis, the supervisor duplicates a copy of the observation notes and gives them to the teacher.

Analysis and Reflection

After the observation, the teacher may record notes of patterns that were observed during the class. The teacher may also want to record areas

for discussion during the conference. When the teacher receives the supervisor's notes and an appointment for the conference, the teacher sets aside time to carefully reflect on the supervisor's notes and discern patterns that appear in the data. The supervisor also takes time to prepare for the conference by reviewing the observation form and jotting down a few areas that relate to the goal identified in the preconference. The supervisor further reflects on the positive patterns which assisted student learning, as these provide the key for assisting the teacher to improve in the goal area identified. The supervisor may want to list several areas which could become the focus of the conference.

Thus, both teacher and supervisor have studied, analyzed and reflected on the data generated by the observation. Both have discerned patterns in that data. And both teacher and supervisor come to the conference with areas that they wish to discuss related to the goal set during the preconference. By completing these tasks before the conference, both the teacher and the supervisor help to assure that the post-conference is productive.

Post-Conference

One conference format is suggested below. Beginning supervisors may want to keep a copy on their desks, and give a copy to the teacher to add structure to the supervisory conferences. This allows the conference to stay on track, especially if the supervisor makes that one of the goals of the conference. However, this is not the only conference format available, (see Acheson and Gall, 1980, for other examples). Whatever conference format is agreed upon, both supervisor and teacher need to practice its use. Once both are proficient, variations will come more easily.

CONFERENCE MODEL
The Champagne-Morgan Conference Strategy
(Champagne & Hogan, 1978)

The following are steps of the model and sample statements for each step:

PHASE I: SETTING GOALS AND COMMITMENTS TO A GOAL

Step 1. Objectives are specified.
"I called you in today to discuss the following issues . . ."

Step 2. All data relating to objectives is shared.
"Let's talk for a few minutes about how you see this and how I see it before we begin to suggest ways to deal with it."

Step 3. Agreement is made to focus on "key" objectives.
". . . seems to be the key issue that we can begin to work on today.

Step 4. Agreement is made that some behavior changes are appropriate.
"Am I right that you want to try to do that differently?"

PHASE II: GENERATION AND SELECTION OF PROCEDURES OR BEHAVIOR

Step 5. Positive appropriate behaviors in the setting related to the objectives are identified and reinforced.
"What was that neat thing you did today; perhaps we can build the new procedure on that?"

Step 6. Alternative behaviors or re-emphases are identified and examined.
"Before we decide what we are going to do, let us try to think of 3 or 4 different ways to approach this."

Step 7. An alternative behavior is selected.
"Which one of these ideas seem the best one to begin working with?"

Step 8. Detailed implementation plans for the selected alternative are completed.
"Now that we have selected a way to go, our next step is to plan in detail what that means."

Step 8a. (If appropriate) Plans made are practiced or role-played.
"Try out Steps 1 and 3 of this process on me here, now. We may need more work on it."

PHASE III: COMMITMENTS AND CRITERIA OF SUCCESS ARE SPECIFIED

Step 9. Criteria for successful implementation of selected behavior are decided and agreed upon.
"Will you suggest some ways we can measure whether our plans are working?"

Step 10. Feedback is shared on purposes, commitments and perceptions of conference.
"We have worked on . . . today, what do you think we have accomplished?"

Step 11. Commitments of both parties are reviewed.
"O.K., here is what I have promised to do, and here is what I think you have promised to do . . . Do you agree?"

CONFERENCE TERMINATES

FIVE PHASES OF A POSITIVE SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

One way to feel more at ease in a supervisory relationship, uncomfortable as that relationship may be, is to have a map of the terrain. In this section the five phases of a positive supervisory experience are described in order to provide such a map. The five phases are: (1) Entrance, (2) Diagnosis, (3) Technical Success, (4) Examination of Meaning for Self and (5) Reintegration. These five phases explore some of the psychological milestones in positive supervision for both the supervisor and the supervisee.

The above phases were summarized from two studies of positive supervision, one from a supervisee's point of view (Herrick, 1977) and one from a supervisor's viewpoint (Squires, 1978). The results are generally consistent with findings of the investigators in the fields of counselor education (e.g., Kell and Mueller, 1966), social work (e.g., Pettes, 1967), psychiatry (e.g., Ekstein and Wallerstein, 1958), and teacher education (e.g., Goldhammer, 1969), and are similar to other typologies in the literature (Horgan, 1971; Gross, 1974; Schuster et al, 1972).

First we will describe the initial three phases of a positive supervisory experience. Next, a vignette illustrates the three phases from a teacher's viewpoint. After examining the last two phases of a positive supervisory experience, a vignette is provided which illustrates key ideas from a supervisory's viewpoint.

Entrance

What happens at the beginning of a positive supervisory experience? From the teacher's point of view, there is initial anxiety stirred up by the expectation of being judged. The supervisor also experiences anxiety, although this anxiety is somewhat relieved as the supervisor creates a relaxed atmosphere and discusses with the teacher his/her expectation of the format and the task at hand. As this discussion continues, the supervisor comes to a positive acceptance of the teacher's capabilities, intentions and intuitions. As the initial format and tasks are defined the teacher becomes more relaxed, open and trusting.

Diagnosis

The supervisor, through discussion and observation, actively engages the teacher in exploring the teacher's professional behavior, self-assessed needs and supervisory history. Congruent perceptions about problems, strategies and solutions are generated between the supervisor and teacher.

As diagnosis is going on, the supervisory relationship is being strengthened. The supervisor uses the teacher's interactions with the supervisor as an indication of problems and/or conflicts the teacher might be having with students. The supervisor shares these perceptions with the teacher. The perceptions form the initial focus in the supervisory process - the teachers interaction with students. The supervisor experiences empathy with the teacher's situation and is able to communicate a sense of caring to the teacher. However, there is respect on the supervisor's part for the teacher's autonomy and integrity. The teacher feels the

format of supervision is sufficiently structured and feels the supervisor's support. This quality encourages both supervisors and teachers to examine actions, feelings, attitudes and conflicts which occur in their professional work.

Technical Success

During the diagnosis phase, areas about which there is some concern have been identified by both supervisor and teacher. Possible solutions have been generated by the teacher. During the technical success phase, the teacher has improved the instruction/learning process through a change of behavior patterns and increasing technical competence. Thus, the focus of this stage is on the improvement of the teacher's instructional patterns with students in valued goal areas.

There are a number of important activities addressed during this stage. The supervisor initiates active interventions in areas where the teacher is in need of assistance and is ready to learn. The teacher is free to accept or reject specific suggestions and/or directions from the supervisor. The supervisor makes available his/her professional knowledge and expertise as the need arises. The supervisor's interventions are consistent with his/her own personal style and are made with sensitivity to the teacher's current needs and readiness to accept new learning.

Mistakes from both parties can be made without fear of failure; feelings can be explored without questioning the worth of the individuals. The feedback the teacher receives from the students is positive and supports the teacher's initial changes. The supervisor indicates through

action a belief that the supervisor's relationship with the teacher is a model for the teacher's relationship to the students. The teacher may thus choose to incorporate some of the supervisor's behavior into interactions with the students.

Student Engaged Time - A Beginning Elementary Teacher's Experience with Supervision

So far, we have discussed the psychological content of a positive supervisory experience; we have emphasized the human dimensions of building a supervisor relationship. In this section, through a vignette, the technical content of the supervisory experience is introduced. This technical content is derived from research which relates observable classroom behavior to student performance. The vignette seeks to describe the emerging competence in the technical aspect of professional teachers' role performance and the progression through the first three phases of a positive supervisory experience.

Student engaged time, according to Huitt and Segars (1980) involves two factors:

- the amount of time allocated for an academic subject
- the amount of time students are actively working on an assigned task.

Generally, the research indicates that first and third graders could spend up to approximately 140 minutes a day engaged (actively working on) reading and language arts activities and 95 minutes a day on mathematics in order to produce gains on standardized tests (Huitt and Segars, 1980, . 11). The amount of time allocated to these activities needs to be somewhat more as students generally don't attend to the task 100% of the time.

Generally, students paying attention an average of 75 to 85% during a class period would be considered about optimal. These findings can be used as tentative standards for teachers and supervisors to use in supervision. However, as standards, they cannot be applied indiscriminately to all teachers in all situations. To be effective, the use of standards must rely on professional sensitivity by supervisors and teachers alike.

Let's listen as Tom, a beginning teacher, describes his experience of a clinical supervisory cycle using the technical content of student engaged time. To set the scene, Tom had met with the supervisor (in this case the elementary principal) on two other occasions. During the first occasion the principal had discussed with Tom the district's policy for the supervision of beginning teachers and the specifics of how the principal would implement that policy. They had talked about both participants' expectations for supervision and set up the first supervisory cycle. After the first cycle Tom and the principal agreed that it would be profitable to take a more indepth look at the patterns of time use in the classroom. Here is Tom's report of the second clinical supervisory cycle which took place during February of Tom's first year.

After the first supervisory cycle, Bill (the principal) thought we might take a look at how students were using time in the classroom. I agreed. Besides, Bill was the boss, and I was having trouble keeping the reading groups and the rest of the class busy at the same time. I'd work with one reading group and could never seem to have enough worksheets to

keep all the other kids busy. Even then, someone was always fooling around, and I'd have to stop the group and get the kids back to work. I had worked hard on setting up activity centers in the class for kids to do after the worksheets, but these also caused some problems, because sometimes the directions weren't clear (it's hard to write directions for third graders) and so they'd come and ask me -- again interrupting the group.

During the preconference, Bill and I talked about this. He began by commenting on what a lot of work I'd put into the centers, and that during his last observation, the centers appeared not to be working out as well as I had expected. Indeed that was true. I was relieved that he thought I was doing a good job. He asked me to explain some of my goals and purposes for constructing the centers. Basically, I said I wanted to use them as an enrichment experience (perhaps the fancy term would impress him) after kids were through with their worksheets from the reading group. He told me that it looked like what I wanted to do was to keep the kids busy on a variety of activities which had to do with reading. I agreed with that one too.

Bill explained that he would come in and be my "eyes" in the class during a reading period. He would record once every two minutes, what each child in the classroom was doing according to the following scheme:

1 - involved in reading group
2 - working on worksheet
3 - working in activity center area

I gave him the names of kids in each of my three reading groups and the

seating charts. Then he would also make an X by the kids who were paying attention or doing their work, and an O after the kids who weren't. He said he'd reproduce a copy after the observation. Then we'd look for patterns in the data. Well, it sounded a little complicated, but I figured he knew what he was doing. Besides it might be interesting to really know what the kids were doing while my back was to them during the reading groups. We set the time for the observation.

Well, I knew he was coming. So, I worked hard on making sure that the directions for the activities in the center were understandable. I even tried them out on a few kids before the day. They showed me that they understood. Then I put their names on the bottom of the cards so that if other kids had questions, they wouldn't have to interrupt me. Why didn't I think of that sooner.

Next, I made sure the worksheets not only reinforced the skills I was teaching, but also that they were interesting. I even prepped the class a little on what would happen when the principal came to visit. He would sit at the side of the room and take notes, and that the students were to pretend he was just a desk or a chair. The kids thought that was pretty funny.

And that is what happened. I wasn't bothered by him taking notes. I knew what he was taking notes on. After a few minutes things settled into routine. I was a little nervous, but my extra preparations helped me feel more confident. And the kids seemed to want to "look good for the principal". I really had a heightened sense of what I was doing,

especially those little slips I made. But then I remembered that Bill was looking at the students and not at me. After observing, he smiled and left.

I was curious about what he had found out. After school I picked up the filled in observation sheets and took a look at them. It was complicated. At the bottom of the sheets were some notes. Total engagement rate for class 70%. Engagement rate for reading groups 90%. Engagement rate for kids working on worksheets 50%. Engagement rate for students on centers 60%.

We had decided to meet the next day for the post-conference during one of my planning periods. I had jotted down some notes about the observation sheets but I was curious and a little suspicious about the numbers. What did they mean? Would I receive my rating on just the numbers? I decided to wait and see, but I would also have my defenses for just using numbers to determine a rating at the ready.

I came into Bill's office - he was set up to work at the cafeteria table he had along one wall on which there were lots of pictures of kids in the school. We got right to the task at hand, it almost seemed too abrupt. Bill did most of the talking at the beginning of the conference. He reviewed with me how he had recorded the data. (It just looked complicated when I saw it yesterday). He went through how he had determined all the engagement rates. I was fascinated that there was all that information about just one small aspect of teaching. Bill briefly reviewed a little of the research and gave me copies of some of the research

articles that he had checked out of the school's library (in my name). He talked about the standard of 75% to 85% engagement rate and said that I had come pretty close. He complimented the attention I received from the kids participating in the reading groups and stated that he believed I would soon have the rest of the class working just as well. He complimented me on the fast-paced discussion and my ability to pull all the kids in for comments. He said they really seemed to be listening to each other. Then he asked how this activity was different than working on seatwork or at the centers. "Perhaps once we review the differences, we can incorporate more of what is working in your reading groups in the other activities". "That would probably help to improve engagement rate in those two groups". We came up with the following list of differences:

1. reading group - teacher-directed
   interactive
   external pacing by teacher
   everyone "knew" they were going to participate.

2. other groups - self-directed
   no interaction with others on the task at hand
   no opportunity for interaction
   everyone working independently
   no clear way of giving rewards to those who did the work in the way expected.

I had never really thought about the different groups in that way. From the list there doesn't appear to be any reason why there couldn't be only two groups in the classroom instead of three. That would mean less time in working alone for students. And there didn't seem to be any reason why kids had to work alone at the centers, or even wait to have me check their worksheets, except that was the original way I set it up.

I mentioned these to Bill while discussing the list. He said they were great, that I should try some different arrangements and see how they worked. He offered only one piece of advice, and that was that I should face the room while conducting the reading group. "Very often", he said, "just a look to a misbehaving kid is all that is necessary". The conference time was getting short. Bill asked me to try out a few of the ideas we had discussed and to let him know how they turned out. He offered to return to the class when things were going smoothly with the changes I was going to try. If I needed any assistance, his door was always open before and after school, or by appointment during my preparation period. I left the office with a few minutes left before the next class.

I was excited about the new look at my classroom and about the things I had discovered. I was also surprised that we just came up with a few ideas but nothing really specific. I will check with the other third grade teacher about some of my ideas to see if she has any other ideas or comments. I am beginning to trust Bill a little more. He seemed to know the right questions to ask, yet wasn't dogmatic about the answers. He gave me enough rope, yet I don't feel out on a limb alone. I got back to my room just as my class returned from music.

<u>To Continue</u>

In this section we introduce the last two phases of a positive supervisory experience: examination of meaning for self, and reintegration. These two phases describe what can happen in a positive supervisory

relationship after the supervisor of the teacher experiences technical success. These phases may not happen in all supervisory experiences, nor does the psychological processes described need to be part of the verbal interchange between supervisor and teacher. What we have found is that in supervisory experiences that supervisors and supervisees categorize as positive, the experiences will resemble the description.

This description of a positive supervisory experience is followed by a vignette from a supervisor's viewpoint which addresses the technical content of student success, one of the most important instructional process variables (Bloom, 1976; Skinner, 1968), and shows some of the meanings one supervisor experiences during the last two phases of supervision.

Examination of Meaning for Self

During this fourth phase in a positive supervisory experience the focus of the supervisor-teacher interaction shifts from a concentration on the teacher's interaction with students to an examination of the personal meanings evolving from the teachers' and/or supervisors' improving professional practice. In examining the meanings of improved professional practice the teacher/supervisor may reveal personal conflicts, and uncertainties as well as personal history which expands the range of content which is acceptable between teacher and supervisor. The teacher/supervisor becomes aware of how specific feelings, beliefs and attitudes can interfere with, or facilitate interactions with the other and students. Thus, the teacher/supervisor in this state, experiences change not only in professional skill and knowledge, but also in self-perceptions.

Personal and professional growth for both supervisor and supervisee evolve from this shift to a more personal level, and foster a deepening of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. The supervisor is aware of this shift, and uses the exploration of the personal considerations toward the goal of improving professional performance; however, the teacher's/supervisor's personal concerns are not necessarily resolved. Although the content of the supervisory sessions has expanded, the supervisor is aware of controlling the depth of his/her involvement, thus maintaining the objectivity necessary to reflect on further changes in a professional manner. The supervisor, during this phase, examines the changing nature of his/her role with the teacher. The supervisor simultaneously feels more freedom and more caution in the relationship. The supervisor is gratified by the increasing technical competence of the teacher and thus feels that the format and content can be less structured. On the other hand, the supervisor is cautious while exploring the more personal territory of the teacher's individual concerns, concerns which are only tangentially related to professional performance. For the supervisor, there is a heightened sensitivity to the teacher; the relationship deepens as a result.

Reintegration

During this stage, both supervisor and teacher consolidate the knowledge, the increased professional performance, the heightened self-awareness and the self-examination into their professional repetoires and

personal lives. The constructive tension of dealing with professional concerns through personal conflicts in the fourth phase is reduced. Satisfaction is communicated.

Learning and growth are evident in the supervisor, the teacher and the student. The feedback from students continue to be positive and problems move toward a solution. The teacher has become aware of how specific feelings, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors can interfere with or facilitate interactions with students. The teacher has to assess changes in his/her behavior in terms of the impact on the students rather than in terms of winning supervisory approval. The teacher experiences competence, self confidence and trust in his/her professional judgement. The teacher and supervisor have explored and come to fuller understanding about personal conflicts which affect the performance of a professional role. The teacher/supervisor is more open and less dogmatic. This expanded conception of the self by the teacher or supervisor has been integrated into the professional practice of each. The teacher-supervisor relationship has come to resemble that of colleagues. Both teacher and supervisor have become more autonomous.

The supervisor's positive experience validates and reinforces his/her philosophy and approach to supervision. The supervisor generally becomes more trusting and open to the supervisory relationship and process.

Student Success and a Teacher's Standards -- A Supervisor's Experience

No one will quibble with the idea that students should be successful in school. Yet, the institution of the school does sort and rank students according to various standards: some pass, some fail. This tension between assisting students to learn and requiring them to perform "up to standard" provides one tension explored by the supervisor and teacher in the vignette.

There is also research, which the supervisor in the vignette will tap, to assist the teacher in dealing with this tension more appropriately. Huitt and Segars (1980) suggest that students experience various levels of success in classrooms. One study (Fisher, Marliave, and Filby, 1979) suggests that some students spend as little as four minutes a day at a high success rate in reading, while others spend ten times that amount. On the other hand, Huitt and Segars review research which suggests that "errorless learning" may not lead to optimal learning. What is suggested is that students need to have successful experience both in their practice exercises and unit tests if they are to perform well on standardized tests. Other factors, such as modes of instruction and students' characteristics, need to be taken into account when considering student success in the supervisory process.

What follows is Robert's, the principal, report of his experience supervising Mary, a tenth-grade English teacher who has been teaching for three years.

Robert has supervised Mary during those three years and has built a working relationship based on a knowledge of Mary's teaching style.

Our preconference ended with Mary stating quite adamantely that she had standards for writing which were not going to be changed. We had agreed, during the ten minute preconference to take a look at students in her tenth-grade class who were successful in meeting those writing standards. The observation would be held in three days time when students would be working in groups on correcting their writing assignments. The classroom observation was only one part of our data collection effort; we also were collecting folders of student compositions to take an indepth look at students' progress in writing during the past six months, a project initiated by the English faculty. And there was also her grade book.

She had become adamant about the standards she had set. We had known each other professionally for three years and had successfully completed a number of supervisory cycles. Her classes were pleasant, orderly, task-oriented, and she was able to convey a real feeling for the beauty of the English language to her students in ways that they could understand. At times, her classes were slightly mechanical, but no one would question her competence and dedication. In light of our previous experience, the adamant reaction about maintaining standards was incongruous.

What appeared to be at issue here was that students were not fulfilling Mary's expectations of written composition. This may be happening for a number of reasons: Mary's instruction needed improving, the meanings Mary gave to the ideas of standards, the amount of time students were spending on the activities, etc. Perhaps there is an inherent conflict

here of helping students succeed and also requiring that they be graded according to whether they had attained a certain standard. Schools, after all, sort students (pass and fail) as well as assist in their learning. Those are two "hats" that are difficult to wear ... I know from my previous role as vice-principal of discipline. I could see some of the same feelings coming across that I had when I first took the "disciplinarian" job. "We must have clear rules. We must enforce them. Otherwise, the school will go out of control. And it will be my fault for not enforcing the rules." The same kind of tension may be at work in Mary's classroom.

During the classroom observation, Mary reviewed the writing standards from an overhead transparency and then divided the kids into pairs to correct each other's papers. This appeared to be a frequently used proofreading routine. I went around the room to the children identified at the preconference to see what they were doing and talk with them, and reviewed their folders. Mary went where children asked for help. I made a note on my seating chart Mary had given me of who Mary helped, and I made brief notes on what was in the "cumulative" writing folders.

Let me summarize some of the patterns I noticed in Mary's class -- I'm sure there were also others -- then backtrack to some of my own feelings, reactions and meanings I attached to those patterns. (1) There did not appear to be any purpose for pairing the students. For example, two students were paired together who both had spelling problems -- they had a difficult time catching the other's mistakes. (2) There was no explanation required of or given by studerts to each other about their mistakes.

(3) There didn't appear to be any specific goals that the class as a whole, or specific individuals were aiming at. (4) From data in the successful students' cumulative folder, all appeared successful in meeting the standards -- however, they appeared to have this ability from their first composition. (5) From the students I talked to, about 60% of the students in the class felt the idea of standards was an imposition on them. It was an onerous task and they didn't see the point. Well, while some of that is just griping, there seemed to be genuine confusion in the students' minds about the purpose of the writing standards. (6) Mary's own explanation to students she was working with was you'll need this for college or to get employment. It was odd that Mary should <u>still</u> be supplying rationale to gain commitment to these writing standards when they had been the focus of class attention for some time.

Upon leaving the class, I understood a little more about Mary's frustration with the writing standards. However, I surmised that the standards weren't the salient issue at all, but the fact that these tenth-grade students weren't cooperating, and indeed weren't learning. And Mary's frustration stemmed from the students not learning -- at least that was my hunch. She may see the students' actions as a rejection of what she is trying to teach, perhaps even a rejection of her efforts in that direction. Her being so adamant in the preconference may be another indicator of her feelings of frustration.

There may be a cycle here. Her students aren't succeeding, she feels

frustrated, she isn't succeeding, she keeps trying, though less and less. Thus, the class activity descends into ritual. Perhaps I should mention this in the post-conference. The six patterns identified above would support doing it. I played out such a conference scenario in my mind. I started to feel depressed. She has probably tried to get out of this cycle and failed. Bringing it up would reinforce the failure. I mean, why can't she see what is happening. I feel frustrated and angry with her in my own imaginery scenario, in the same way I suspect that she feels frustrated with her students.

It's at this point that something clicks, my own patterns of reaction become clear to me. I am looking for frustration rather than success, because that is what Mary directed my attention towards. I have reinforced that through the patterns I observed in the classroom and the imaginary conference scenario. I was not conscious or aware that Mary's definition of the problem was becoming my own. I need to recognize this in order to be able to break the pattern, and to break the cycle of frustration, for myself, with this new understanding.

It was interesting to look back and see how I had fooled myself into thinking I was looking for success -- the observation of students who were succeeding, the gaps I identified in the instruction of students not being paired with a purpose, the emphasis on Mary's justification of the standards. Yes they were all patterns, but all patterns that reinforced the students' lack of achievement and Mary's frustration.

I decided those were not the patterns to share in the follow-up

conference. Instead, I thought back to the observation to look for patterns which did show success. There were the writing standards and Mary was concerned about them. The students did have folders for a cumulative record of their writing. The students did go through the motions of correcting each other's papers - certainly saving the teacher much time. There were students in the class who had mastered the standards - a potential resource. The standards were written down and shared with the students. It was beginning to fit together in my head. Now, the problem was how to get Mary to see and utilize the potential of these positive patterns during the conference.

Mary was frustrated and perhaps even a little confused. She would not be able to think clearly until some of that had been defused. I could promote venting the frustration -- but decided not to. It might reinforce the cycle of frustration and set the conference off on the wrong emotional foot. Besides, she probably had vented her frustrations on others. I sensed she was looking for a way out of the frustration and so at the beginning of the conference I decided to be very directive with the agenda. That may provide the structure and secure feeling to explore some options. During the first part of the conference I would ask her to recall the teacher who was best able to communicate a concern for the standards of writing. This would allow me more insight into her definition of standards and might take her mind off the present situation. Then I thought of sharing some of the research on student success and its importance on learning. There are lots of implications and meanings to explore with Mary around the research finding that generally students spend only

50% of their time on tasks which provide for high success. I suspect we will be able to tie that into her description of her previous teacher. After those points are raised then I will discuss the positive patterns (the second set) and then brainstorm with Mary ways that those patterns, and the intentions for succeeding in helping students attain those standards can be more fully realized. The research will be helpful in establishing those goals.

* * * * * * * * * * *

I have just seen Mary in the hall two weeks after our follow-up conference. She reports that she feels excited because she is able to see her students' progress toward attaining those writing standards and in part because she implemented some of the ideas we generated during the conference. For me, its great to see her excited about her success again. I have a feeling the students are excited also.

I have grown in this experience also. I am more aware of my own patterns of interaction and my susceptability to "buying into" a particular teacher's way of looking at a problem. I see myself like a tuning fork that resonates to other sounds. That is helpful, as I can empathize with others' way of viewing the world. On the other hand, it may lead me to reinforce cycles of frustration which were evident here. I am more aware of this pattern now. Perhaps I should have shared my own thought processes with May so she could confirm that my hunches were on the right track.

During the last two weeks I have noticed and mentally charted my reactions to others. I am finding that this way of thinking is becoming more "natural" and more habitual; it doesn't feel strange anymore. Because of the success with Mary, I feel more confident about doing supervision. I am more sure about what it means to emphasize the positive through my own thought processes, and also in structuring situations for others to do the same. It's a quiet feeling of a job well done.

SUMMARY

There are two contents of any supervisory relationship. The technical content is what is to be improved. In our vignettes the technical content of supervision was student engaged time and student success. This technical content can be derived from research which relates observable behavior to student performance. The psychological content deals with how the supervisor and teacher think about their interactions and improvements. We have suggested that there are five phases within a positive supervisory experience which may provide a map of some of the concerns a supervisor and teacher will experience. The technical and psychological content, however, are not separate and distinct.

The supervisor needs to be able to use his/her own reactions, feelings and instincts as well as analytic skills in exploring with the teacher both aspects of the supervisory experience. If supervision is done with sensitivity and care, both supervisor and teacher can grow in terms of their skill in performing a professional role and in their comfort in the ever expanding range of possibilities open to them. Students benefit and the school as an organization comes closer to its goal.

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